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Human Development Report

Update on Human Development Report consultations

1. General Assembly resolution 57/264, adopted in January 2003, invited the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board to include a separate agenda item on the Human Development Report in its annual workplan. The resolution aims to strengthen the process of consultation with Member States regarding the Human Development Report, and enhance the quality and accuracy of the Report without compromising its editorial independence.

2. In line with that resolution, this document provides an update to the Executive Board for its consideration at the 2010 annual session. It reviews how the topic of the 20th anniversary Human Development Report was selected, the broad range of consultations and other interaction taking place with stakeholders from around the globe, the informal Executive Board consultation process during the preparation of the Report, and some broad and emerging findings of the 2010 Report.

3. In 2008, the Human Development Report Office held a special network consultation to help identify potential themes for the 2009 and 2010 Human Development Reports. A virtual discussion took place on the Human Development Report network – known as 'HDRNet' – as well as the UNDP resident representatives' network, the democratic governance network and the capacity development network.

4. While migration was proposed for the 2009 Report and subsequently endorsed by the UNDP Administrator, many respondents also expressed support for commemorating the 20th anniversary through a review of Human Development Report contributions to development thinking, policy, and practice.

5. The process of broad exploratory consultations with development thinkers, policy makers and practitioners, including civil society advocates, began in mid-2008. This helped shape the conceptualisation for the 2010 Human Development Report, with which the UNDP Administrator agreed. Consultative processes intensified around the end of 2009, with a series of more technical meetings. In

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order to reap synergies while containing costs, efforts were made to link consultations to existing events in different localities (the annex outlines a schedule of consultations). Consultations were held on the occasions of the 2008 and 2009 annual conferences of the global Human Development and Capability Association in New Delhi, India, and Lima, Peru, in conjunction with a meeting organized by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative in the United Kingdom, and at the 3rd Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) World Forum on Measuring Progress of Societies, in Busan, Korea. Consultations were also held in Buenos Aires, Johannesburg, Sydney, Canberra and with members of the UNDP civil society advisory group and experts on indigenous peoples. The governments of France and Morocco, and the European Commission each hosted consultations on the human development concept, regional considerations in measurement of human development, and human development and development cooperation respectively. Thematic consultations were held to investigate inequality, empowerment, sustainability, and gender dimensions of human development, as well as a series of informal expert reviews (April 2010) with the OECD development centre in Paris, United Nations partners in Geneva and Bangkok, and the Africa meeting of the World Economic Forum.

6. An academic advisory panel, comprised of eminent thinkers and practitioners with expertise in areas of human development and measurement, advised Report preparation, with two face-to-face meetings (in January and March 2010), complemented by virtual interaction. The UNDP readers' group, representing all the regional bureaux, reviewed and discussed the Report at key points in the process. Presentations of the human development approach and materials developed for the Report at seminars, events and international conferences were, and continue to be, other mechanisms for obtaining valuable feedback. Similarly, the 'seminar series' – started by the Human Development Report Office for the 2009 Report – is open to staff, permanent missions and development practitioners as another way to solicit feedback.

7. In addition to the face-to-face consultations with scholars and development experts, virtual network discussions have taken place on HDRNet. This solicited, for example, input on how the concept of human development could be adjusted to reflect current concerns. More broadly, the Human Development Report website has had approximately seven million hits since the October 2009 release of the 2009 Human Development Report, and an electronic mailing-list now has more than 13,000 subscribers, both of which allows the Human Development Report Office to engage with wider audiences in human development discourse. Since January 2010, a monthly online column entitled 'Let's talk human development' invites readers to comment on features authored by the Human Development Report Office Director and research colleagues. See http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2010.

8. During the process of preparing the Human Development Report 2010, two informal consultations with the Executive Board were held. At the first consultation in January 2010, the Human Development Report Office Deputy Director presented the concept note as endorsed by the UNDP Administrator (and as outlined in paragraph 12), describing the process of consultations and research that had begun. The discussion highlighted the importance of considering inequalities in opportunities, the challenges to human development from the global financial crisis, and the volatility of food prices. Participating Member States also expressed strong interest in dialog around the Human Development Index and other topics.

9. The second informal consultation with the Executive Board, scheduled for April 2010, would focus on the critical findings emerging from ongoing research, and main issues pertaining to the statistical data presented in the Report.

10. Consultations with Member States on improvements to measuring the three dimensions of Human Development Index took place between Human Development Report Office, the bureau of the United Nations Commission on Statistics, and representatives of regional statistical bodies in March 2010. This followed interest expressed by Member States during the 41st meeting of the Commission, which met in February 2010, in New York.

11. Drawing on findings from consultations and new research, the Report is expected to point to dramatic gains made in human development over the past four decades. The Report will further reflect on the enabling and disabling factors and policies, and the persistent and new challenges. Inequality, lack of empowerment and vulnerability have emerged from the analysis as the critical constraints to progress. The Report will suggest some enhancements to the human development conceptual and measurement framework. It will underline the critical relevance of the approach to sustainable achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the millennium development agenda, and will help to articulate the wider development endeavour of which the Millennium Development Goals are a vital part.

12. The Human Development Report Office is committed to developing the Report in the spirit of the ground-breaking concept of capabilities and development as freedoms, posited by Nobel laureate Amartya Sen, and promoting public debates based on rigorous research of evidence and analysis. Consultations, the release of background papers, the online data and 'make your own Human Development Index' are all a part of ongoing efforts to present findings and thinking in a transparent manner, and in full and effective consultation with Member States, with due regard to the use of resources and the impartial nature of the Report.

13. The 20th anniversary of the Human Development Report and the human development approach is critically important to the millennium agenda. The Human Development Report Office and UNDP will continue to mobilize development partners, media and the general public in donor and programme countries around the human development approach and give visibility to its relevance to global development challenges in the years ahead.

Annex

Consultation	Location	Date
Informal review of Human Development Report findings, sister organizations and partners	Geneva, Switzerland	29 April 2010
Informal review of Human Development Report findings at OECD Development Centre	Paris, France	28 April 2010
Informal review of Human Development Report findings, sister organizations and partners	Bangkok, Thailand	16 April 2010
Review of Human Development Report findings	Canberra, Australia	13 April 2010
Second Executive Board informal consultation on the Human Development Report 2010	New York, New York	5 April 2010
Second UNDP readers' group meeting on the Human Development Report 2010	New York, New York	30 March 2010
Second advisory panel meeting on the Human Development Report 2010	New York, New York	26 March 2010
Sustainability, environment and human development	London, United Kingdom	1 February 2010
First Executive Board informal consultation on the Human Development Report 2010	New York, New York	25 January 2010
First advisory panel on the Human Development Report 2010	New York, New York	22 January 2010
Gender and human development	Istanbul, Turkey	21 January 2010
Towards a new Human Development Index	Rabat, Morocco	16 January 2010
Indigenous peoples' perspectives on human development	New York, New York	11 January 2010
Political rights, democratic participation and human development	Washington, District of Columbia	11 January 2010
First UNDP readers' group meeting on the Human Development Report 2010	New York, New York	16 December 2009
Multidimensional poverty and inequality	New York, New York	14 December 2009
Rethinking human development - Harvard theorists' consultation	Cambridge, Massachussets	7 December 2009
Brussels: Human development in development cooperation	Brussels, Belgium (European Commission)	13 November 2009
Challenges to human development in East Asia	Busan, Korea	28 October 2009
Platform Human Development 2010: UNDP civil society consultation	New York, New York	28 October 2009
Second global consultation with national Human Development	Busan, Korea	25 October 2009

Consultation	Location	Date
Report teams		
Development as freedom and expansion of opportunities: Paris consultation	Paris, France	20 October 2009
Human Development and Capability Association - human development in Latin America and Caribbean	Lima, Peru	9 September 2009
Human Development Indicators - University of New South Wales, Sydney consultation	Sydney, Australia	17 August 2009
Platform Human Development 2010: towards a people's multilateralism, UNDP civil society consultation	New York, New York	4 June 2009
Oxford informal consultation on the Human Development Report 2010	Oxford, United Kingdom	3 June 2009
South Africa consultation on the Human Development Report 2010	Johannesburg, South Africa	30 April 2009
Human Development Report 2010 brainstorm session - Latin America and the Caribbean	Buenos Aires, Argentina	21 November 2008
Human Development and Capability Association - retrospective on Human Development Reports	New Delhi, India	10 September 2008